



Stijn Billiet
Head of Unit
Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (MARE.B.2)
DG MARE

Sent by email to: Stijn.BILLIET@ec.europa.eu

Brussels, 19 December 2023

Dear Mr. Billiet,

The European social partners for Sea Fisheries, the European Transport Workers' Federation and Europêche, represent respectively the workers and the employers' groups in the European Social Dialogue Committee for Sea Fisheries.

In our Committee we address, among other issues, the global dimension of our sector, as part of the external dimension of the CFP and the fundamental role played by the EU in the global market. In this respect, we are active in monitoring the progresses and also the problems some relevant third fishing countries face when it comes to the social dimension of fisheries, particularly the safety and working conditions of workers.

One of the countries we pay attention to is Taiwan, because of the high number of Asian migrant fishers working on board vessels owned by Taiwanese companies and the worrying labour abuses documented, particularly in Taiwan's vast distant water fleet.

In this context, the Social Partners would like to draw to your attention the campaign **Wi-Fi NOW for Fishers' Rights** that is asking the Taiwanese vessels owners to install free Wi-Fi connection on board of the vessels and to the Taiwanese authorities to create the necessary incentives for that to happen.

We are aware of the efforts the Taiwanese government/administration takes to improve the working and living conditions of fishers, migrant fishers in particular, including the provision of WiFi on board fishing vessels.

Providing free Wi-Fi connection to the crew is essential not only to allow migrant fishers to stay in contact with their families, since they stay for months at sea, but also to expose labour abuses and strengthen the right of migrant fishers to organise themselves. In the annex you can find a more detailed briefing note on the campaign and the organisations that support it.

During the last Plenary of the European Social Dialogue Committee for Sea Fisheries that took place on 10 November, both ETF and Europêche delegations expressed support for the abovementioned objectives. Even though the provision of Wi-Fi on board of vessels is not mandatory by international nor

EU law, Social Partners believe that incentives and campaigns supporting better technologies and communication on board are of utmost importance. For that reason, we would jointly like to ask you to take this initiative into account in the talks you have as European Commission with the Taiwanese authorities, particularly with a view to improve the situation and vulnerability of migrant fishers working on Taiwanese fishing vessels.

Furthermore, since as we are aware you have contacts with the Taiwanese representation in Brussels, we would like to explore the possibility to have a joint meeting with you and their *attachés* for Agriculture and Labour, where we could also invite representatives from the organisations leading the campaign. Ideal dates for us could be 30 January in the morning or 31 January in the afternoon, as we have already meetings planned in Brussels.

With our best regards,



Cor Blonk
Europêche
Chair of the SSDC-F



Juan Manuel Trujillo Castillo
ETF Fisheries
Section Chair in the SSDC-F

Annex: Wi-Fi Campaign Taiwan